



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE ARRESTS 582 VIOLENT GANG MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES IN TWO-WEEK NATIONWIDE ENFORCEMENT OPERATION *Operation nets 13 in Rhode Island under ICE's ongoing "Community Shield" anti-gang initiative*

PROVIDENCE—Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, and Marcy Forman, Director for Investigations for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), today announced the arrest of 582 street gang members and associates during a two-week, nationwide enforcement action under the auspices of "Operation Community Shield," ICE's ongoing national anti-gang initiative.

From July 16 to July 28, ICE offices throughout the United States teamed up with federal, state and local law enforcement partners to target members of more than 54 violent street gangs, including Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), Sureños, 18th Street Gang, Latin Kings, Vatos Locos, Mexican Mafia, La Raza gang, Border Brothers, Brown Pride, Norteno, Florencia 13, Tiny Rascal, Asian Boyz, Jamaican Posse, and numerous other violent street gangs.

The 582 gang members and associates, including 11 gang leaders, arrested in this two-week operation are accused of various criminal violations and/or administrative immigration violations, in total, 76 of these individuals have been charged with criminal violations that range from illegally re-entering the United States after deportation; to being alien in possession of a firearm; to possession of fraudulent documents or various state crimes.

The vast majority of the gang members and associates, 506, were arrested on administrative immigration charges, ranging from being a convicted felon foreign national subject to removal; to entering the country without inspection; to violating the terms of a visa. Of these individuals, 261 are foreign nationals who have prior criminal convictions, rendering them subject to removal from the United States.

Locally in Rhode Island, ICE arrested 13 street gang members over the past two weeks.

"There is no room for gang violence in our communities," said Matthew J. Etre acting special agent-in-charge for ICE in New England. "These gang members need to know that we are committed to ensuring public safety, and that we're prepared to keep the pressure on through aggressive law

enforcement action. Working closely with law enforcement partners, we will use the full range of authorities available to ICE, to seek out, prosecute and remove these dangerous criminals from our streets and where possible, our country.”

The arrests during the past two weeks are the latest enforcement action under Operation Community Shield, a nationwide ICE anti-gang initiative intended to disrupt, dismantle, and assist in the criminal prosecution of violent gangs by employing the full range of authorities available to ICE.

ICE uses its broad immigration authorities (both criminal and administrative) against gang members, as well as its customs authorities in targeting gang-related narcotics smuggling, money laundering, and in seeking the forfeiture of illegally derived assets.

Operation Community Shield involves strong partnerships and cooperation with existing federal, state, and local anti-gang efforts. Such partnerships are essential to the success of the initiative and to ensure officer safety during operations. ICE uses intelligence on gang organizations and leadership provided by state and local authorities. This information is then used whenever possible to arrest, prosecute, and/or deport individual gang members. Locally, ICE has partnered with the Providence Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the United States Attorney’s Office in Rhode Island.

Operation Community Shield also has an important foreign component, coordinating efforts through ICE’s Attaché offices abroad, particularly those governments that are also experiencing gang problems. To date, ICE has participated in several anti-gang law enforcement summits and conferences throughout Central America to better coordinate anti-gang related efforts.

The initial target of Operation Community Shield was MS-13, which is one of the largest and most violent street gangs in the country. In February, ICE kicked off the initiative with agents in six major U.S. cities conducting a coordinated enforcement operation that resulted in the arrest of 103 members of MS-13. In the months that followed, ICE agents throughout the country joined ranks and continued targeting MS-13 members in their jurisdictions.

In May 2005, ICE expanded Operation Community shield to include all criminal street gangs and prison gangs with foreign-born members. With the launch of this second phase, ICE’s Operation Community Shield aims to ensure that gang members have no safe haven in our nation’s communities.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.